



Congress of the United States
House of Representatives

Washington, DC 20515-4302

August 11, 2011

The Honorable Jeb Hensarling
Co-Chairman
Joint Select Committee on Deficit Reduction
129 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Co-Chairman Hensarling:

Our country faces a daunting task to get our spending under control, and I commend your decision to step up to the plate and take on the tremendous responsibility of serving on the Joint Select Committee on Deficit Reduction.

Most importantly, I urge you and the committee to remain steadfast and not support any proposals to raise taxes. The last thing our economy needs right now is new taxes. New taxes will only hamper economic growth and prolong the economic downturn.

However, there are many common sense proposals out there that can raise revenue, reduce spending, and save federal dollars without raising taxes. I would like to take this opportunity to suggest a few proposals that I have introduced this Congress to be considered by you and the Committee.

Recently, I introduced the American Land Act (H.R. 2588), which mandates that the Bureau of Land Management and the U.S. Forest Service sell 8% of their land holdings each year from 2012 through 2016 (US National Parks are not included). This could result in as much as \$200 billion in new revenue for the Federal Government, which could be used to pay down the deficit without raising taxes on the American people.

I also recommend that the Committee consider repealing the individual mandate to purchase government-approved health insurance. The Congressional Budget Office estimates that enforcement of the individual mandate will cost between \$5 and \$10 billion dollars over the first 10 years of implementation and will require the IRS to hire an additional 16,000 IRS agents. In addition to this high cost, many Americans, including myself, believe the individual mandate to be unconstitutional. At the beginning of this Congress, I introduced H.R. 154 to prohibit funding for the federal mandate to purchase healthcare, and the bill currently has 57 co-sponsors in the House. In economic times like this, the Federal Government should not be spending billions of dollars to enforce a mandate on American's to purchase health insurance.

A growing number of Americans believe that before we make additional cuts to our government, U.S. foreign aid to foreign governments should be cut first. As you know, under

the current rules of the House, foreign aid is voted on as one big legislative package in the House. The U.S. sends taxpayer money to 150 of the 192 countries in the world. In FY2010, U.S. foreign assistance totaled \$39.4 billion, or 1.1% of total budget authority. In real terms, this was the highest level of U.S. foreign assistance since 1985, back when we were in the Cold War.

The American people would be shocked to know some of the places where we send their money. Our country simply cannot afford to be shelling out taxpayer money to nations when it is not in the best interest of the United States. For that reason, I introduced the Foreign Aid Accountability Act. This bill will amend the rules of the House of Representatives to prohibit the consideration of any bill or joint resolution that appropriates foreign assistance for more than one country. It will change the rules so that members of Congress vote on each country--one at a time. I urge the Committee to consider proposals such as this that would provide transparency to our foreign aid programs, and potentially save billions of dollars a year. America needs to take care of America first in times like this.

At the very least, the Committee should immediately prohibit foreign aid to Pakistan. Recently, I offered 2 amendments to the Department of Defense Authorization bill to cut \$2 billion of U.S. military aid to Pakistan. With the prospect of cuts to our own Defense Department, we should immediately cut all aid to foreign governments whose loyalty is in question. So far this year, we have given Pakistan \$3 billion dollars in aid, and I believe the majority of Americans would agree that we have seen little, if any, value from that money. This blind support needs to stop immediately.

While our fiscal problems are daunting, America has faced big challenges before. I am confident we will prevail-- as we always do-- and remain the greatest country in the world. I look forward to working with you and the Joint Select Committee on Deficit Reduction on these important issues.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'TED POE', followed by a long horizontal line extending to the right.

TED POE
Member of Congress